

Dear Editor,

I wish to take this opportunity to sincerely apologise to Mr Ian Faithfull of Victoria University and the Victorian Department of Primary Industries, for failing to acknowledge him in the paper 'Golden Sun Moth *Synemon plana* (Lepidoptera: Castniidae): results of a broad survey of populations around Melbourne' (*The Victorian Naturalist* 125: 39-46).

Ian was responsible for finding one of the populations mentioned in the paper (site 15), which in turn led the authors to investigate sites more broadly in the Greenvale/Oaklands Junction area, and which ultimately led to the discovery of

additional populations in the local area. This fact was not stated within the report and should have been.

It was not the authors' intention to deliberately leave Mr Faithfull out of the acknowledgements section or the body of the paper, nor was it the author's intention to mislead the reader into thinking that Biosis Research was responsible for identifying every population identified in the paper.

Yours faithfully,
Daniel Gilmore
Senior Zoologist
Biosis Research Pty Ltd

Dear Editor,

In your June 2008 edition of the *Victorian Naturalist* you published a book review written by University of Melbourne Associate Professor Brian Finlayson, which contained negative commentary about the Forest Practices Board (now known as the Forest Practices Authority), which he described as a 'tame watchdog' and 'morally and scientifically bankrupt'.

A long-standing tradition and principle in the scientific community is that scientists should not attempt to discredit the reputation of other scientists or organisations by publishing unsubstantiated slurs on their reputations. For example, the American Association of Petroleum Geologists' Code of Ethics states that 'members shall not falsely or maliciously attempt to injure the reputation or business of others' and 'members shall not make false, misleading, or unwarranted statements, representations or claims in regard to professional matters'. The Royal Society of New Zealand Code of Ethics requires that scientists should 'avoid falsely, vexatiously or maliciously attempting to impugn the reputations of colleagues'. Clearly Dr Finlayson is unaware of these standards.

University of Yale research¹ has found that the Tasmanian forest practices system is among the most prescriptive in the world, which gives the lie to claims that the forest industry in Tasmania is a 'tame watchdog'. The Forest Practices Authority provides independent advice and conducts

independent audits and research relating to the continued improvement of forest practices in Tasmania and is one of the premier forest research organisations in the state: over the last ten years it has published numerous reports on forest-related issues. In this time it has also published more than 50 papers in peer-reviewed journals, both in Australia and internationally and the independence of its scientists is demonstrated by the fact none of these was vetted by the forest industry prior to being submitted for publication.

By any measure Dr Finlayson's derogatory remarks about the Forest Practices Authority are unprofessional. They reflect badly on him, the University of Melbourne, and *The Victorian Naturalist*.

The remarks reflect badly on Dr Finlayson because a person of his standing should be able to separate facts from political beliefs, and be aware of the ethical standards required of a senior member of a university department. They reflect badly on the University of Melbourne because, by signing over the University of Melbourne address, Dr Finlayson implies that his views represent those of the University. They reflect badly on the *Victorian Naturalist*, because this magazine prides itself on presenting informative factual science and this venture into the partisan political arena lowers the scientific standing of the publication.

I suggest that the editor of *The Victorian*

Naturalist should, as a minimum response, make clear that Dr Finlayson's views are not those of *The Victorian Naturalist*, and that Dr Finlayson should apologise to the scientific staff of the Forest Practices Authority for making unsubstantiated allegations about their moral status and scientific integrity, and make clear that the opinions he expressed are his own and do not represent those of the University of Melbourne.

Yours sincerely,
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Forest Practices Authority
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4 July 2008

1. <http://www.yale.edu/foreste certification/Tasmania%20Rreport%20Final%20rev%20Feb%2008.pdf>

Reply to Dr Peter McIntosh's letter

Let's begin by clearing up one of Dr McIntosh's misconceptions. It is an established practice that academics at Australian Universities are free to express opinions on matters pertaining to their disciplines and to identify themselves as University staff. Such statements do not represent the views of the University.

I agree that the remarks made in my book review were expressed in intemperate language, but I stand by the contention that they were meant to convey. What I said there was not based on any political views I may hold, but on my experience in representing the Tasmanian Environmental Defender's Office in a court contest with Forestry Tasmania, and in visits I made to the north east of Tasmania to see forest practices being carried out there by Forestry Tasmania that had presumably been approved by the Forest Practices Authority.

Space here does not permit me to elaborate in detail on the evidence that supports my point of view. I have, however, written in more detail to the Chairman of the Forest Practices Authority. Here, I will present just one piece of that evidence. Dr McIntosh claims that 'the Tasmanian forest practices system is among the most prescriptive in the world'. In the photograph below the two people are standing in the bed of a Class 3 stream in a Forestry Tasmania logging coupe at Mt Arthur where, under the prescriptions of the Tasmanian forest practices code, there should be a buffer zone. I could fill the rest of this issue of *The Victorian Naturalist* with similar cases. I'll bet that the 50+ papers the staff of the Forest Practices Authority have published in peer-reviewed journals carefully avoid descriptions of these logging practices.

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